

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7490

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG, EFIS, NZ

SUBJ: FUEL FOR TUNA RESEARCH VESSEL PARAMOUNT

REF: STATE 4330

1. BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (MAF) TOLD EMBASSY ECON OFFICER PARAMOUNT NOW HAS SUFFICIENT FUEL TO OPERATE FOR ABOUT ONE MONTH.

2. GNZ DECISION ON HOW TO HANDLE FUTURE BUNKERING NEEDS STILL PENDING.

3. MINISTER AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES ANXIOUS HAVE SURVEY PROJECT CONTINUED TO COMPLETION.

4. OFFICIAL GNZ DEMARCH THROUGH MFA BEING PREPARED TO REQUEST POSSIBILITY OF AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY FUEL FURNISHED PARAMOUNT IN NZ DURING PERIOD RESEARCH PROJECT MIGHT BE RESUPPLIED TO NZ FROM US SOURCES. THIS WOULD BE CALCULATED ROUGHLY ON AMOUNT PARAMOUNT WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED TO CONSUME WERE IT OPERATING AS USUAL OFF US COAST. (CUNNINGHAM SAID HE UNDERSTOOD PARAMOUNT CONSUMED ABOUT 1,000 GALLONS PER DAY. IT EXPECTS TO WORK 22 DAYS PER MONTH. ACCORDING TO HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFORMATION TOTAL PARAMOUNT CONSUMPTION WOULD BE

ABOUT 250,000 GALLONS PER YEAR.)

5. IN LATE DECEMBER CUNNINGHAM AND MR. TRUTANIC OF STARKIST DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY HANDLING SUCH A RESUPPLY ARRANGEMENT THROUGH ONE OF OIL SUPPLIERS OPERATING IN BOTH NZ AND USA SUCH AS BP BUT IT WAS DECIDED ACTUAL AGREEMENT (OR CONCURRENCE) OF USG WOULD BE NECESSARY.

6. COMMENT: QUESTION OF BUNKERING FOREIGN VESSELS STILL VERY SENSITIVE HERE. PRESS GAVE PLAY TO A RECENT CASE OF BUNKERING JAPANESE FISHING VESSEL WHICH HAD PUT IN TO LAND AN INJURED SEAMAN. INCIDENT CAUSED PROTEST FROM NZ FISHERMAN WHO REPORTEDLY UNABLE TO GET FUEL. IN ANOTHER CASE USSR GAINED FAVORABLE MENTION FOR DELIVERING 1,000 TONS OF OIL "LENT" BY SHELL NZ TO RUSSIAN PASSENGER LINER WHICH HAD DIVERTED TO LAND A SICK PASSENGER.

7. PRESS COULD ALSO WELL SEIZE ON BUNKERING PARAMOUNT FROM SCARCE NZ SUPPLIES, POSSIBLY PLAYING UP STARKIST INTEREST IN NZ FISHING. STARKIST HAS SO FAR ONLY BEEN MENTIONED ONCE IN PRESS, IN AN ARTICLE CRITICIZING KRAFT FOODS CORPORATION INTEREST TO TAKE OVER LARGE NZ CHEESE MANUFACTURER. STARKIST WAS CITED AS ANOTHER US MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION WHICH GNZ GRANTED LICENSE INVESTIGATE PELAGIC AND TUNA RESOURCES AND OWN 50 PERCENT OF PROCESSING AND CANNING FACILITIES. ADVERSE PUBLICITY ON BUNKERING PARAMOUNT COULD DO SOME HARM TO DEVELOPMENT OF STARKIST FUTURE INTERESTS HERE.

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